



IMPROVING STANDARDS OF RENTED HOMES



RENTAL PROPERTY STANDARDS FOR SINGLE OCCUPANCY HOMES



FOREWORD

At PAL, we are committed to improving the standard of privately rented accommodation in Welwyn Hatfield and creating a better, safer and fairer private rental sector for our residents.

We know that the majority of tenants are satisfied with the treatment they receive from their landlords and the standard of their rented homes. We also know that the majority of landlords and letting agents operating in our borough are providing good quality services and properties. However, a small minority are exploiting tenants and dragging the reputation of the sector down and we believe it is important that tenants can distinguish creditable landlords and agents from these individuals and make informed choices when renting their homes.

This is why, in January 2012, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and the University of Hertfordshire came together and founded PAL - our free and voluntary landlord and property accreditation scheme that recognises landlords and agents that meet their legal obligations and those that go above and beyond to provide quality homes.

We understand that to secure the success of our scheme, we must ensure that Welwyn Hatfield's landlords, letting and managing agents are aware of their responsibilities. To achieve this, we have developed these PAL Rental Property

Standards that outline the legal requirements of providing rental accommodation in the UK and also provide a model for best practice in providing good quality homes. All PAL accredited landlords and partners commit to abiding by the contents of this document in order to gain and maintain their accreditation.

We thank you for participating in our scheme and hope that this guide will assist you in meeting your obligations, whilst providing assurance to tenants and driving up the private rental standards in Welwyn Hatfield.



Geraldine Ward
Deputy Dean of Students, University of Hertfordshire



Ellen Gava
PAL Landlord Accreditation Manager



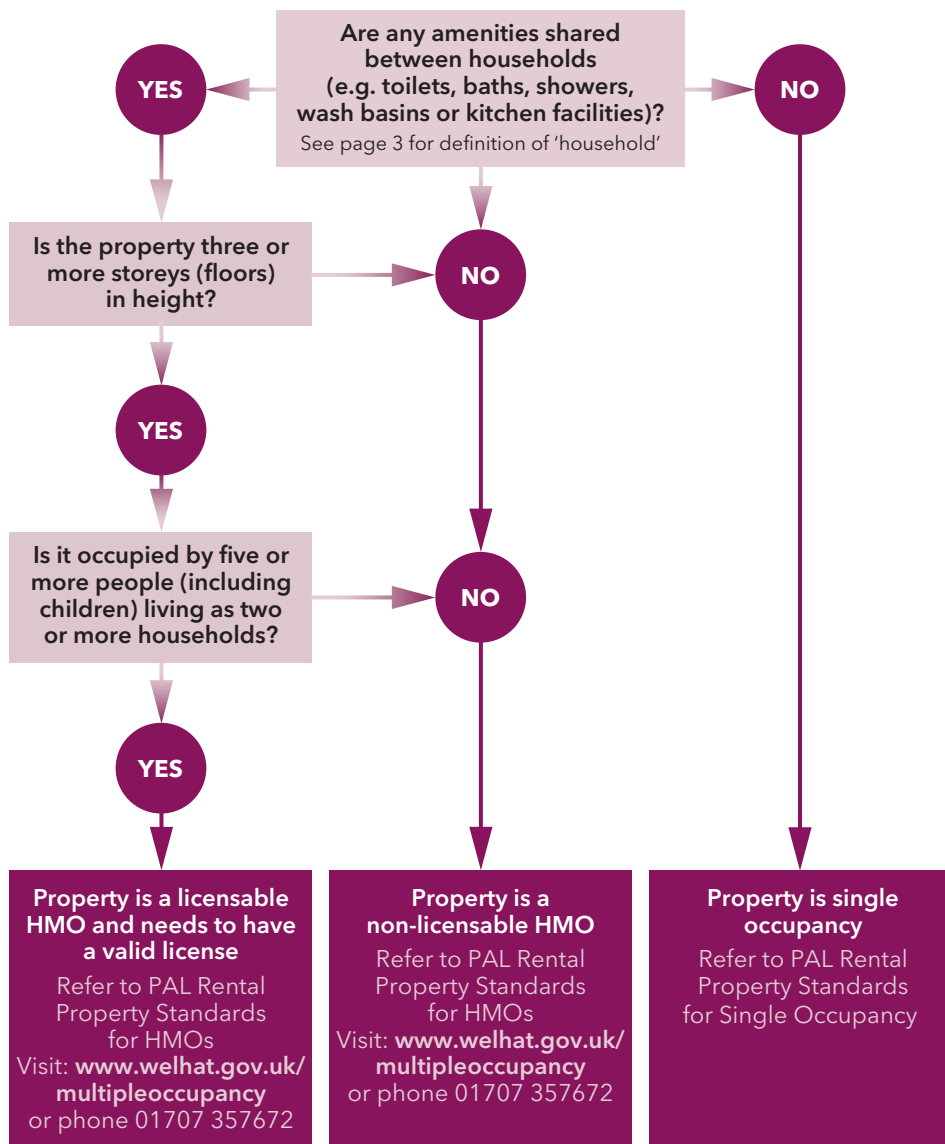
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DEFINITIONS AND CATEGORIES OF PROPERTY

HOUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 'House' is not conclusively defined in legislation but includes flats, blocks of flats, and the grounds, outbuildings and boundaries.
HOUSEHOLD	<p>Each of these is a single household:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ a single person;■ co-habiting couples whether or not of the opposite sex;■ a family of related people.
SINGLE OCCUPANCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Property made up of a single household
HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ A house (or flat) that is let to three or more unrelated tenants (or two or more households) who share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet.
LICENSABLE HMO	<p>An HMO that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Three or more storeys high including habitable basements, attics, and any commercial property, and■ is occupied by five or more people, and■ is occupied by people as their only or main home.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY PROPERTY IS SINGLE OCCUPANCY?



THE AIM OF THIS DOCUMENT

The PAL Rental Property Standards for Single Occupancy Homes sets out the property standards expected from a PAL Accredited Property. It aims to reflect but does not replace any legal obligations expected of private sector residential landlords.

PAL property accreditation requirements are based around the following five areas which will be assessed:

- Electrical Safety
- Fire Safety
- Thermal Comfort
- Security
- Repair and Maintenance

For a property to be accredited, it must be managed by an accredited landlord or an accredited agent/ partner. Properties which meet all the stated property standards are certified by PAL or an accredited PAL partner as 'Accredited Properties'.

PAL also recognises higher standard properties using a gold mark to distinguish those properties that exceed legal requirements. For a property to be gold standard accredited, it must be managed by an accredited landlord or an accredited agent/ partner and meet the specified additional requirements for the following areas:

- Energy Efficiency
- Security
- Standard of Accommodation
- Space and Facilities

ACCREDITED PROPERTIES

PAL Accredited and PAL Gold Standard Accredited Properties are distinguished using the following accreditation logos:



This reflects both the expected level of management expertise and the amenities in the property.

PAL Accredited and PAL Gold Standard Accredited Properties can be promoted using their awarded logos including on our website at www.pal-online.org.uk/property-search

Please read through this document thoroughly to ensure that your properties meet the outlined requirements.

SECTION ONE: Property standards for PAL Accredited SO properties

SECTION TWO: Requirements for Gold Standard Accredited SO properties

SECTION THREE: Relevant legislation, regulation and further reference documents

SECTION FOUR: Accreditation Checklist

It is recommended that the Rental Property Standards are read in conjunction with the PAL Code of Practice – a brief document which outlines the level of management expected from PAL landlords, letting and managing agents.

SECTION ONE: PROPERTY STANDARDS FOR PAL ACCREDITED SINGLE OCCUPANCY PROERTIES

The property, including the structure and associated outbuildings, yard and other amenity space and means of access, must provide a safe and healthy environment for the occupants and meet the following standards:

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS			
	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL	FURTHER REFERENCE
1.1	General Property Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The property is maintained in a satisfactory state of repair and is free from avoidable hazards. ■ At the start of tenancy the property, furnishings and appliances are clean and in good working order. 	<p>Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)</p> <p>Repairs Priority Guide WHBC Amenity Standards pg 32</p>
1.2	Kitchen Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Each kitchen has facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food which are suitable for the number of occupants using the kitchen. 	Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
1.3	Toilet and Personal Washing Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are adequate facilities for the number of occupants. ■ The facilities are in a condition that can be maintained in a clean and hygienic state. ■ A washable floor covering is provided. 	Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
1.4	Furniture and Storage Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All furnishings and furniture are in a clean and reasonable condition and comply with current Fire Safety Regulations. ■ All bedrooms are of an adequate size. 	Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended)



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	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL	FURTHER REFERENCE
1.5	Thermal Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The property is sufficiently insulated to current standards. ■ A valid Energy Performance/Environmental Impact Certificate (EPC) is available. 	<p>Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.</p> <p>Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)</p>
1.6	Heating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All habitable rooms are heated and the property has controls that allow separate use and programming of heating and hot water including a programmer/timer and room thermostat. ■ Thermostatic radiator valves are fitted to radiators where possible. 	<p>Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)</p>

HEALTH AND SAFETY

	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL	FURTHER REFERENCE
1.7	Fire Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Each kitchen is fitted with a fire blanket. ■ Hallways, landings and staircases are maintained as safe and free from significant obstructions and domestic appliances. This is to enable evacuation of the property in the event of fire. ■ Internal doors are of sound construction. ■ A Carbon Monoxide detector is installed in any bedroom or living room where there is a combustion appliance. ■ A smoke alarm is provided on every storey of the property. 	<p>British Standard EN3 1869:1997</p> <p>Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)</p> <p>British Standards S 476: - 20: 1987 Fire tests on building materials and structures.</p> <p>LACoRS Guidance on Fire Safety (2008) www.lacors.gov.uk</p>

	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL	FURTHER REFERENCE
1.8	Gas Appliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All means of use and supply of mains gas and alterations and repairs to gas installations comply with the current Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations. ■ All gas appliances are serviced and tested annually by an engineer endorsed by Gas Safe Register and a Gas Safety Certificate provided. 	<p>Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998</p> <p>Health and Safety Executive Gas Safety Advice</p> <p>Gas Appliances (Safety) Regulations 1995</p>
1.9	Electrical Installations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An adequate number of suitably sited electric sockets are provided in the property. ■ An approved electrician (NICEIC or similarly approved) certifies all electrical wiring installations as safe and future inspections are carried out as recommended on the Certificate. ■ A copy of a current Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) is provided - 10 yearly or more often if specified by electrician. 	<p>Plugs and Sockets etc (Safety) Regulations 1994</p> <p>British Standard 7671 - Requirements for Electrical Installations. IET Wiring Regulations.</p>
1.10	Electrical Appliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All electrical appliances provided by the landlord are functioning in accordance with manufacturers' operational limits and are capable of being operated in a safe manner. ■ All electrical appliances are visually inspected before the start of the tenancy for signs of wear and tear. 	<p>Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994</p> <p>Plugs and Sockets etc (Safety) Regulations 1994</p> <p>British Standard EN 60335</p>



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	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL	FURTHER REFERENCE
1.10	Electrical Appliances (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A Portable Appliance Test (PAT) Certificate is obtained for each appliance every 12 months. If appliances are less than a year old, a PAT test is not required but a copy of a receipt is required. 	www.gov.uk/firekills
1.11	Liquefied Gas/Paraffin Heaters and Appliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No form of bottled gas or paraffin heaters are provided by the landlord or his/her agent as a heating or cooking source. 	www.gov.uk/firekills
1.12	Lighting and Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All rooms have adequate ventilation (this can be ventilation either by openable windows or by mechanical ventilation for bathrooms). ■ All properties are provided with adequate lighting, particularly on internal staircases. 	Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
1.13	Hallways and Stairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A handrail is fitted on all staircases, internal and external, which consist of three or more steps. ■ There are no openings on stairs or the guarding, which allow a 100mm diameter sphere to pass through. 	Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
1.14	The Environment and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All properties are provided with adequate refuse disposal facilities including adequate external recycling bins. 	www.welhat.gov.uk/waste

	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL	FURTHER REFERENCE
1.15	Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ External doors are of a solid construction and compliant with British Standard 8621:2007 ■ Vulnerable windows are capable of being effectively secured against entry without compromising the means of escape in case of fire. ■ All windows on the first floor and above have window restrictors fitted. ■ The boundaries of the property are physically defined by way of robust and well maintained walls or fencing. ■ Gates at the side or rear of the property are securely fitted. ■ Hedges around external doors and windows are kept trim to avoid providing screening for burglars. ■ Lock barrels fit flush with the door and comply with recommended British Standard EN 1303:2005. 	<p>British Standard 8621:2007</p> <p>British Standard EN 1303</p> <p>British Standard :7950</p> <p>British Standard EN 1303:2005.</p>

OTHER PROVISIONS

	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL	FURTHER REFERENCE
1.16	Landlords Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If a property is on a buy-to-let mortgage it has insurance as specified by the lender. 	

SECTION TWO: SUPPLEMENTARY REQUIREMENTS FOR PAL GOLD STANDARD ACCREDITED SINGLE OCCUPANCY HOMES

PAL Gold Standard Accredited Properties are required to meet additional requirements on top of the property standards detailed in Section 1.

	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL
2.1	Energy Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The property has an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) demonstrating a minimum rating of D. <p>And at least two of the following are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Full double glazing throughout ■ Energy saving motion activated (PIR) lighting throughout common areas ■ Energy Saving light bulbs throughout all common areas ■ An 'A' rated efficient boiler ■ 'A' rated efficiency for any other appliances.
2.2	Security	<p>At least two of the following are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An intruder alarm system ■ External approach / security lighting ■ CCTV ■ A security door viewer ('spy hole') ■ A secure post box ■ Secure bicycle storage ■ An appropriate refuse/ recycling store ■ A door chain
2.3	Standard of Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The external appearance and upkeep of the house is maintained in repair, clean condition and good order. ■ External recreation space is maintained to a high standard (garden/yard/outbuildings). ■ Carpets, curtains and decoration within common parts are clean and in good repair.
2.4	Inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A current detailed inventory is available for the property.

	REQUIREMENT	DETAIL
2.5	Fire Safety	<p>At least one of the following are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A mains powered Grade D LD3 fire alarm system (with battery back-up) which includes a heat detector in kitchen is installed. ■ All external exit doors can be opened from the inside without the use of a key.

SECTION THREE: RELEVANT LEGISLATION, REGULATION AND FURTHER REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

3.1 The following legislation applies to this PAL Rental Property Standards document:

- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Housing Act 1996
- Housing Act 2004
- Occupiers' Liability Act 1957
- The Law of Property Act 1925 (c.20)
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Building Act 1984
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1987

3.2 The following regulations apply to this PAL Rental Property Standards document:

- The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended)
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- General Product Safety Regulations 1994
- The Plugs and Sockets etc. (Safety) Regulations 1994
- Institution of Electrical Engineers Wiring Regulations
- Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999
- The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

It is the Landlord's or appointed Agent's responsibility to ensure they are familiar with the relevant legislation and regulations appertaining to private rented homes.

3.3 The following reference documents have been cited in this PAL Rental Property Standards document:

- *Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)*; Department for Communities and Local Government: August 2006
- WHBC Amenity Standards pg 32
- www.depositprotection.com Tenant Deposits, Disputes and Damages leaflet
- BS 8621:2007: *Thief resistant lock assemblies – Keyless egress*
- BS EN 1303: *Building hardware – Cylinders for locks – Requirements and test methods*
- BS:7950: *Specification for enhanced security performance of windows for domestic applications*
- Fire safety in the home: Fire Kills www.gov.uk/firekills
- www.welhat.gov.uk/waste
- BS 7671: *Requirements for Electrical Installations. IET Wiring Regulations.*
- ‘The Siting of Domestic CO Alarms’, page 34, the Health and Safety Executive www.hse.gov.uk
- British Standard EN 50291-1:2010+A1:2012: *Electrical apparatus for the detection of carbon monoxide in domestic premises. Test methods and performance requirements*
- Health and Safety Executive Gas Safety Advice: www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/
- British Standard 5839 part 6: Grade D, LD2: *Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings. Code of practice for the design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of fire detection and fire alarm systems in domestic premises*
- LACoRS Guidance on Fire Safety (2008) www.lacors.gov.uk
- British Standard EN3 1869:1997: *Fire blankets*
- British Standard 5266-1:2011: *Emergency lighting. Code of practice for the emergency escape lighting of premises*
- Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (Directive 2002/91/EC, EPBD)
- Welwyn Hatfield Council booklet “Houses in Multiple Occupation – Licensing Guide for Landlords”

SECTION FOUR: ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST - SINGLE OCCUPANCY PROPERTIES

	YES	NO	COMMENT
4.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS			
Is the property in a reasonable state of repair and free from avoidable hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have emergency repair arrangements? (displayed in prominent place)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4.2 FIRE SAFETY			
Does the property have adequate means of escape and fire precautions? (as per the scheme requirements)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do the furnishings comply with Fire Safety Standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4.3 GENERAL STANDARD OF MANAGEMENT			
Do the management arrangements for the property comply PAL Code of Practice?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4.4 THERMAL COMFORT & ENERGY PERFORMANCE			
Does the property have an adequate heating system and effective thermal insulation? (as per the scheme requirements)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4.5 SECURITY			
Is the property secure? (as per the scheme requirements)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



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4.8 DOCUMENTS REQUIRED		FREQUENCY
Gas Safety Certificate	Annual	
Portable Appliance Test Certificate (PAT)	Annual	
Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR)	10 yearly (or more often if specified by electrician)	
Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)	10 yearly (or when additional energy efficiency measures are installed)	
Details of Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme	Issued at the start of a tenancy period	
Tenancy Agreement	Issued at the start of a tenancy period or at renewal stage	
4.9 GOLD ACCREDITATION		
See list of criteria – Section 2 of this document.		

DISCLAIMER

The PAL scheme operator will endeavour to keep the information in this document current and accurate, but will not accept liability for any loss to any person or third party resulting from information contained or omitted from this publication.



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